

The Christian

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Edited by
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News-Letter

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THE SECOND MEETING OF THE United Nations Commission on Human Rights is now in full swing at Geneva with Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt in the chair. Although the Commission on Human Rights appears at first sight to be only one among a number of commissions set up under the Economic and Social Council, the work it has to perform is of central and not of marginal importance to the whole idea of the United Nations. Following the lead given by President Roosevelt, who in a speech

made before the United States came into the war said that he looked forward to a world founded on four essential freedoms, freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear, the Dumbarton Oaks Conference which shaped the outline of the United Nations stated that the promotion of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms would be one of the main tasks of the new organization. The Charter of the United Nations accepted at the San Francisco Conference provided for the setting up of the Commission on Human Rights. The Commission has sub-Commissions on two important and highly controversial subjects: one on the Freedom of Information and of the Press, and the other on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities.

The Commission at its present meeting has two tasks to perform.

NEWS-LETTER

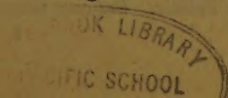
THE UNITED NATIONS
COMMISSION ON HUMAN
RIGHTS

THE STRUGGLE FOR
FRANCE

SUPPLEMENT

FREELY YE HAVE RECEIVED
FREELY GIVE

BY THE RT. HON.
GEORGE TOMLINSON



It has before it a draft Declaration of Human Rights¹ drawn up by the drafting committee which met in July. This, after revision by the Economic and Social Council and the eighteen member nations of the Commission, will be sent to the next meeting of the General Assembly next year. It has also to draw up a Convention on Human Rights (a very much shorter document of eleven articles over against the Declaration's thirty-six). The Declaration will bind nobody, but it will set a standard. The Convention will be submitted to member nations of the United Nations and those which sign it will have to consider themselves bound by its clauses and to seek a means of enforcement.

No one can tell whether acceptance by the Assembly and the general publication of a Declaration of Human Rights will contribute to an increasing respect for human rights among the nations of the world. Statements of aspiration to which lip service is paid but which are openly ignored or flouted operate against, rather than for, the cause which they are meant to serve. Even if an International Court of Human Rights is set up and the new Convention on Human Rights is administered as a part of international law, the chief hope of bringing about an increasing respect for human rights is the gradual upbuilding of a world-wide public opinion. There is no doubt that, for example, the American Bill of Rights started a leavening process which has been at work in American history since Jefferson's day. Can the same thing happen on a world scale? If one is prepared to take a long view the answer may very well be that it can. The very fact that whereas the USSR has stood out of Unesco she is a member both of the Commission on Human Rights and of its drafting committee is of considerable importance, for it means that there is a place where the differences between the Soviet approach, which puts the community above the individual, and other approaches—Western, Chinese and others—can be talked out.

The work of the Commission marks a stage in the widening of the conception of international law. The International Court of Justice at the Hague meted out justice in disputes between states, but had nothing to do with individuals. The

¹ The draft Declaration and draft Convention appeared in the *United Nations Weekly Bulletin*. Reprints from H.M. Stationery Office, price 6d.

second world war has brought about a change of opinion about the scope of international law. Many people in all parts of the world now see that those who precipitated this war were not just violating international law—they were trampling down the rights and dignities of the citizens of their own and other countries. The Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Trygve Lie, says in his annual report, "The world has grown smaller and life more complicated and the problem of human rights has become universal." It is increasingly felt that if a state breaks faith with its citizens and tramples down their elementary rights, it ought not to be a matter of indifference to the rest of the world, and that if one state exercises upon another state, by war, the threat of war or by other means, a pressure which leads to the denial of human rights in that state, those oppressed citizens ought to have the means of appealing to humanity. This universalizing of human rights is closely linked with the question of the causes and prevention of war, because it is just those states and governments which have least respect for the human rights of other peoples which are most likely to start wars. If therefore an attempt to increase respect for human rights among the nations is successful, it will contribute materially to the cause of peace.

Nearly all the thirty-six articles of the Declaration would lend themselves, were there space, to comment from the Christian point of view. That is impossible here. The first article of the Declaration is of particular interest. It reads:—

"All men are brothers. Being endowed with reason and conscience, they are members of one family. They are free, and possess equal dignity and rights."

The placing together of reason and conscience as the universal attributes of mankind which separate men from all other creatures is of critical importance. Many of the rights enumerated spring from conscience—the right of man to oppose a tyrannous government for example; the right to hold any beliefs, religious or otherwise, and to change those beliefs.

The next three articles turn on the relation of men to the society they live in and their duties to society. Here the drafting committee met with marked differences of opinion and has

proposed alternatives, one giving in some detail what the duties of the individual are to the society which guarantees his rights, the other combining these three articles into one which simply states that man owes duties to society. The reason for the acuteness of this controversy is that whereas men's rights before the law and in politics have in civilized societies been battered out over the last few hundred years to a fairly satisfactory conclusion, the recognition of economic rights is new. The inclusion of social security as a basic human right is now widely accepted, while the increasing care of some states for the young, the old and the disabled has issued in the desire to see these benefits universalized. But so far the duties of the individual to balance these rights remain undefined. They are, in fact, points of controversy and appear in such discussions as that which took place in the House of Commons on the direction of labour. In the United Nations Commission the matter has already evoked strong differences of view. A great education of public opinion is needed, for while it is generally accepted that no man's rights should interfere with the rights of others, it is far less generally accepted that (as the Australian delegate put it) "no rights are absolute. You have to state them and remember that they are all limited by duty".

There is one article dealing with freedom of religion. As drafted it includes a man's freedom to worship as he chooses provided that this right does not interfere with public order, morals and the rights of others; it includes also the right to hold or change his beliefs. It omits one important factor, and the United Kingdom has proposed an alternative text which includes it—the right, subject to the same restrictions of public order and morals, of every person of full age and sound mind to give and receive any form of religious teaching, and of parents and guardians to determine what religious teaching their children or wards shall receive.

Freedom of worship is granted by the constitutions of nearly all states, and many people think the struggle for religious freedom is over. This is far from true. Acute controversies arise about men's freedom to change their beliefs and their freedom to propagate their beliefs by preaching or teaching. For example, in 1933, education in Egypt was made compulsory,

but in government elementary schools no instruction in the Christian faith to Christian children is permitted. If a bill now before the Egyptian Parliament is passed, no children in private schools may be taught a religion not their own, even if their parents wish it. In Iraq since 1940 no one has been allowed to attend primary schools run by Christian missionaries, and in the same year in Iran the control of all schools was taken over by the government. In many countries in the Near East, although Christians are allowed to worship, they are only permitted to do so in authorized buildings and permits for their erection may be years in coming.

The same question, what are human rights in the matter of religious faith and practice, is under discussion by the Constituent Assembly of the new Dominion of India at this present time. The emergence of state education and the unification of educational systems all over the world make this problem of the rights of religious minorities acute. A joint committee of the British Council of Churches and the Conference of British Missionary Societies on religious liberty keeps the Churches and missionary societies informed. It has produced a good statement called "Human Rights and Religious Freedom" and has forwarded it to the United Nations Commission for consideration. This document makes it very clear that it is not pleading that there shall be special rights and privileges for Christians. It carefully emphasizes that it would like to see a general standard and general principles of action applicable to *all* religious minorities whether they are Christians in the Near East, Jews in Germany, Mohammedans in the Dominion of India, Protestants in Catholic countries or religious minorities of any kind, anywhere. The really important thing is that Christians should be the last people to stand for privilege and the first to stand for other people's rights.

THE STRUGGLE FOR FRANCE

Christian News-Letter No. 298 in which we discussed the building of the Yugoslav Youth Railway has brought us a large correspondence. A number of readers quote instances of projects undertaken by international groups under such bodies as the Youth Hostels Association and International Voluntary Service for Peace. One reader who spent part of the summer in

the Pyrenees building an international youth hostel, writes : " I rather reluctantly admit that much of the great enthusiasm in projects of this kind is due to the thrill of helping to *make* something, where results can be seen." Another reader says that he has seen educational projects in Mexico which resembled the youth railway. He continues, " In the years which I spent in the Amazon Basin, I used to get much commiseration from friends about the conditions under which one lived and the enormous difficulties involved in organizing in this hostile region things like consumer co-operatives up and down the rivers. But, looking back, I think that this was not only the easy but the satisfying part of one's experience. In such an enterprise one is largely dealing with 'untamed nature', but the reconstruction of civilization involves radical dealing with a host of institutions which we ourselves with our brains and hands have created, with the peculiar mixture of folly and wisdom which characterizes human endeavour. The solution of the youth railway, therefore, is not the ultimate solution. It is the creation at the same time of a problem for the future. It requires a much vaster element of discrimination, and, above all, a highly tuned and perceptive sense of moral wisdom, which can sort out the gold from the dross. It is, therefore, the older civilizations even more than the younger which make a demand upon spiritual capacity, and yet it is precisely in those civilizations that their capacity seems to be ebbing. That is one aspect of our dilemma."

The real question is the one which Nicodemus asked of Jesus, but applied to the life of a nation, " How can a man be born when he is old ? " How can a nation with all the experience and wisdom of an established civilization recapture the faith and the vitality without which it must die ? The question is not how it can prolong its life by extending its old age, but how it can be born again to youth which looks forward and not back and lives by hope and faith and not on memories and nostalgic longings.

It is tempting to regard this question too much as a British one ; as one reader puts it, " Here in Britain we look ' in ' instead of ' out ', ' down ' instead of ' up '. Are we growing into ' little people ' with no room for anything except the

obvious?" If instead of looking inwards to our own national situation, we looked outwards to Britain as part of the continent (yet not shut up exclusively to the continent but open to the world because of her membership of the British Commonwealth of Nations) we should get this country's resources and duties at this present time into clearer perspective.

There are hundreds of reasons why it is impossible for us now to think in terms of "the island" and of cultivating our own patch. It is not possible in economics, nor is it possible in the realm of culture and ideas. It has been the frequent function of the island to receive from the continent some of its most violent or creative upsurges and tame and modify them. The summons to us now is to look outward both to be warned that what we see over the Channel may wound us deeply by creating stresses and tensions particularly among the young of the nation, and to be encouraged to see that dark as Europe's path now is, how much darker it would be without the steadying hand of Britain at this time.

A letter from yet another reader takes up this point. "If civil war does come to France, or if de Gaulle achieves personal power without war (even with some respect for constitutional niceties) people are going to be torn inside all over Western Europe as they were never torn even over Spain. The Communist Party is already reported to be at work here training the international brigade for France. Some students have already been on courses. It makes your blood run cold. The schism will go deeper than Spain; and the sense will spread—'destruction called on to destroy destruction' with the assurance that it is the noblest who will perish. The situation on the plane of economic and political realities may be as the *New English Weekly* and the *Economist* suggest, i.e. the dependence of the Marshall plan and the Monnet plan alike for success on stable government in France. But that doesn't alter the fact that 'de Gaulle au pouvoir' will hardly help us to a vision of the worth of 'free society'. I am shocked at the readiness of Christians here to say 'it will have to be de Gaulle'. Is not this the wrong kind of realism?"

In the outcome it may be that for political or economic reasons one or other of these two does achieve uneasy power in France. If de Gaulle comes to power, Mr. Bevin cannot but remark upon it and define in word or by action this country's policy. In nothing do the British differ so markedly from the French as in our political history, but that we shall feel the backwash of what happens in France is inevitable. It will not help the French, it will not help us if in this country an increasing number of voices begin to say, "Well, after all, perhaps for the sake of security the strong man had better come to power—perhaps the only chance of preserving liberty in the long run is to maintain order in the short run." Such a line of argument presupposes that de Gaulle will contrive to maintain a dictatorship on the Roman and not on the fascist model, that he will not be pressed by opposition to more and more extreme measures and that he will be able in the fairly near future to restore liberty and freedom. These are large suppositions. Such a line of argument also presupposes the final failure of the M.R.P. and the Socialists to prevent a radical breach which would plunge France into civil war.

In this attempt Christians have played a notable part. If they are defeated, then let Christians here say "they made a stand against heavy odds and went down in the fight to preserve the unity of France", and not "well, after all, perhaps de Gaulle is the best solution".

Great and terrible issues for France, for Europe, for this country even, hang upon the success or failure of the attempt to save France from disintegration. Has she the political strength to ride out the storm? Can the M.R.P. hold together, or will it split on the de Gaulle issue? Above all, can there be in France a break in the general continental tradition that Christians and *Socialists* cannot work together, which will enable the M.R.P. and the Socialists to continue to hold the extremes on each side?

Political parties are very much like families: their traditions are built slowly, their new members are subjected to the influence of party heredity and environment. It is very difficult to bring about radical changes in the outlook and values of a party by battering it from without, and much easier for it to be corrupted or purged by influences working from within. The strength of

the political position in this country is that no continental would recognize in our Conservative and Labour parties the "Right" and "Left" he knows on the continent. For all their differences they have a common debt to Christian influence in the past. We publish as our Supplement, by permission of the Minister of Education and the B.B.C., a sermon preached by the Minister over the air on Education Sunday. At the time when Mr. Tomlinson was a young man, beginning to preach as a Methodist lay preacher in Lancashire and embarking on the interest in education which carried him, via the Lancashire Education Committee and the chairmanship of the Association of Education Committees, to his present high office, a Minister of Education in France spoke in the Chamber and used these words: "We have applied ourselves to the task of anti-clericalism, the task of irreligion. We have torn human consciences away from the faith. When a poor wretch, fatigued with the weight of the day, knelt down [to pray] we raised him up. We told him that behind the clouds there was nothing but chimaeras. We have extinguished the lights in heaven, lights that no one will ever be able to re-kindle." The Chamber in its enthusiasm voted by 240 against 128 that this speech should be *affiché* in all the 30,000 Communes of France.

That was forty years ago, but the leaven of this and similar utterances has been working in France: the men of to-day were brought up in state schools subjected to those influences.

THE CHRISTIAN FRONTIER

As readers of the Christian News-Letter know, it has behind it the activities of the Christian Frontier Council and the wide experience of its members. When we announced in C.N-L. No. 286 the addition of A. J. Dain to our staff we hoped that we were on the eve of a very considerable Frontier expansion. Unhappily for us, though it may be for the good of the larger Christian cause, Mr. Dain has received from India an urgent request to return to missionary work in a very troubled and needy part of the country. The urgency of the task in India, for which Mr. Dain is almost uniquely suited by experience and by knowledge of the language, make him and his colleagues feel that he cannot do other than leave for India almost at once. The six

months which he has spent with us have been enough to show what a loss the Frontier is sustaining in his departure.

Dr. Oldham, when he gave up the Editorship of the Christian News-Letter nearly three years ago, was anxious also to be relieved of his responsibilities as senior officer of the Christian Frontier Council, in order that the leadership might pass into younger hands. He was prevailed upon to continue in office with a special view to recruiting younger staff. He feels that the time has now come for him to lay down the central responsibility for the work of the Christian Frontier and he is resigning that office at the end of this year. Both the News-Letter and the Frontier owe their existence to Mr. Oldham, and if his resignation were a farewell there would be much, very much, to be said. Happily for us his wisdom and his undiminished energies are wholly at the disposal of his colleagues in News-Letter and Frontier alike—and we hope that they will be so for many a long day.

Though certain advances for which we had hoped have to be postponed, the Christian Frontier Council is firmly resolved to maintain its work. In particular it believes that the Christian News-Letter has a task to perform on which it wishes to concentrate its main efforts. An increase in C.N-L. circulation during the year shows that there is an enlarging opportunity for its work.

Kathleen Bliss

P.S. Christmas Gift subscriptions will still be in time if posted *at once*.

“FREELY YE HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE”

By the Rt. Hon. GEORGE TOMLINSON

LIFE is made up of receiving and giving, from the cradle to the grave.

As far back as we can remember, and beyond our recollection to the time when we were helpless bundles in our mother's arms, we have been receiving from our parents that which it was in their power for them to give us. In our earliest years we were dependent upon them for food and raiment, for nourishment both of our bodies and our minds. As we grew in years our requirements grew with us, and we received more and more ; until having reached manhood or womanhood we realize that our indebtedness to our parents is such that we can never hope to repay the debt.

This is true of each one of us ; it is as true of the poorest amongst us as of the richest, for whether we have been blessed with an abundance of this world's goods or not, the very fact that life has been sustained at all means that we have “freely received”.

Now, although we can never hope to repay our parents for what they have done for us, there is, as it were, a Divine law at work enabling us to repay our debt to those who have ministered unto us in the past, by carrying on their work in the present and the future. We liquidate our debt to our parents by the freedom and liberality with which we minister to our children.

The blessings bestowed upon you by your parents are a sacred trust that you must hand on to your children. As you have freely received, so you must freely give. All the loving care and tender thought that were lavished upon you by your father and mother must be handed on by you to your children.

Only thus can the continuity of good life possibly be maintained.

And not only is it true to say that we owe a debt that we can never repay, but we are also indebted to others, right down the ages from the beginning of time. We sometimes come into contact with people who, in speaking of a man who has risen above his fellows, either in the realm of commerce, or learning, or art, refer to him as a *self-made* man, meaning of course that he has risen by his own efforts. But to speak of a self-made man is the sheerest folly.

I care not whether his efforts have been tremendous, whether his task has required herculean strength for its accomplishment, whether his rise to fame has been phenomenal. A man may be clever ; he may be hard-working ; he may be brilliant ; he may be all three ; but whatever else he is, he is certainly not self-made. Remember his debt to his mother in the first place ; call to mind the time when he was a helpless bundle in his mother's arms, and tell me not that he is self-made. If he has risen to fame in the realms of commerce, think of the debt he owes to those who have gone before him, who opened up maybe the trading channels along which he has sailed for fortune. As a merchant, what does he owe to Columbus ? More perhaps than he can tell. As an engineer, what has he received from the efforts of Stevenson ? As a cotton spinner, what does he owe to Arkwright ? I care not what he may be, he is heir to the efforts of the ages that have preceded him ; whatever heights he may have climbed have been reached from the platform that was built for him by those who came before.

The *artist* of to-day, does he not owe a debt to the masters of the past ? Most certainly he does, a debt he can never repay except by passing on to future generations that which he has received from them, and that which his own creative genius has added thereto. Realizing that he has freely received, so he must freely give, if he would keep alive *Art* at its highest and best.

The *student* also, as he pores over the revelations of master minds of days gone by, does he not by the very

reverence with which he handles his books, acknowledge the debt he owes them? And does not the knowledge of having received freely from past masters inspire the student to renewed and vigorous effort, calling forth the desire to give to his day and generation as freely as he has received from the past?

How true this is of that vast army of *teachers* whom we have in mind particularly to-day. The army upon which we are dependent for the defence, not only of our cultural standards, but of those principles which govern life and conduct.

Who amongst us cannot testify to the beneficent guidance we have received from schoolmaster or schoolmistress in days past, and does not the continuing influence for good—greater perhaps to-day than ever previously in our history—of this great profession, bear out the truth of what I am saying?

So one might go on; to the reformers of days past we owe a debt of gratitude for work done. We have entered into the heritage for which they toiled and only as we realize our indebtedness to them, and strive to hand on to those who come after us that which we have received from them, with our own accomplishments, if any, added thereto, are we proving ourselves worthy. For freely as we have received, freely must we give.

Now if this principle is true of life in the sense of which I have been speaking, it is, I believe, more true, if that be possible, of the religious life.

Freely ye have received, freely give, is a presentation in simple form of the two sides of religion.

Religion is not a pond, but a pool. A pond, you know, has inlets, but no outlets. It gathers water from the surrounding land, but that which it gathers remains there. It is fed by little streams that flow down into it from the mountain side; it receives them all, but it gives off nothing.

The pool, on the other hand, has outlets as well as inlets, that which flows into it on the one side flows out on

the other. It receives freely, but it gives as freely as it receives. The pond is always stagnant ; it is very often dirty, the home of impurity and filth. In the summer it dries up altogether and the bed is revealed, rank and rotten and poisonous.

On the other hand, the pool is always active, the in-flowing and outgoing water keep it always in motion and it is clean and pure, the home of life and sweet-growing herbage.

And *religion*, I repeat, is a "pool" not a "pond". A pool of *living water*. Oh, I know there are some people whose religion is a pond. Who receive unto themselves (or think they do) all the blessings of Christianity and who give nothing out. Who have discovered a joy in worship, but have never tasted the joy of service. Yes, and like the pond, their lives are full of unwholesomeness, their religious life I mean, of course, and suspicion, envy, malice and spite are very often to be found in the depths thereof.

But the true Christian is the one whose religion is a pool ; who has realized that the great joy and mystery of life is in receiving and giving.

Religion is not simply an attitude of mind. It is a conception of life. It is not simply an intellectual belief ; but an endeavour to translate a belief into actions ; and the Christian religion, which is the religion of Jesus Christ, is an attempt to interpret life in the terms of Jesus Christ, to live our lives in the spirit of Christ, to mould our characters according to his plan. Worship, public worship, which to some people is the beginning and the end of religion, is but an expression of our thanks to God for what we have received from him, or an outward manifestation of our reverence for him, or an expression of our adoration. It is certainly an important part of our religious life, but it is not religion itself. Religion can only be translated in terms of life. The great truths of religion, such as the fatherhood of God, and the Divinity of Christ, are subjects which call for the exercise of our minds in endeavouring to understand them ; but the great thing about the fatherhood of God

is not the intellectual grasping of the fact, so much as the endeavour which follows the realization of this great truth, to live our lives as befits the sons of God.

The truth that enlightens us as to our sonship, also enlightens us as to the sonship of all men, and we realize that a universal fatherhood implies a universal brotherhood. If God is the father of all, then all are brothers. Here is where the value of our religion is revealed. The man who says that he believes in the fatherhood of God, but treats his brother as though he were dirt beneath his feet, is a liar. You remember how St. John puts it.

“ If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar : for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen ? ”

Not what we say we believe constitutes our religion, but what our actions reveal us to believe, is the mark of our calling. No, to receive for ourselves the realization of God's fatherhood, and deny by our actions to others a similar sonship, is to proclaim our religious life, the life of the pond, receiving without giving. To enter fully into the joy of God's fatherhood, we must hand on to our brothers that which we have received, the full realization of our sonship, and all that it implies, and not in words only, but in every conscious action of our lives.

And so with the great and fundamental truth of Christianity. The reconciliation of man and God in Jesus Christ. We are not only to be the receivers of all that that great truth implies, but having received freely we are to give as freely as we have received. And it is fundamental. Whatever differences of opinion there may be amongst us as Christians we all believe that “ God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself ”, and what does this mean ? In plain simple language, it means that God in endeavouring to win man back from his own foolish and sinful way, became as man himself in Jesus Christ, and in his life revealed the Father's heart of love, well nigh broken by the burden which the world's sin cast upon it, and even submitted himself to the death of the cross, in order to accomplish

his purpose. Thus Christ became a Saviour. A Saviour from sin, and we have received this revelation from God.

We are the receivers of this message of love and grace. We are the fortunate beholders of this revelation of Divine mercy and compassion. It was for us that this great sacrifice was made. Why? Think you that all this was planned in order that we might sit and contemplate the glories of the world to come, as I am afraid we have inferred sometimes? Oh, I tell you I have no use for a religion which is nothing more than an insurance policy against the risks of future perdition.

No, it was for something infinitely grander than this that the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary was made. It was the call; the hungering call of Divine love, to the love that had been implanted in the heart of humanity, and was in danger of being lost in the welter of selfishness and sin.

And still the call rings out loud and clear through the centuries and when in our heart of hearts we respond to the call we realize that we have freely received.

All that God could do for us he has done. The best that he could give he has freely given, and if our religious life is what it ought to be, we cannot be receivers only, we too must give.

What are we called upon to give? Our time, our thoughts, our talents, all must be placed at his service.

When I survey the wondrous Cross,
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.
Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small.
Love so amazing, so Divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

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